RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 28th July, 1988/6 Sravana, 1910 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, **Chairman** in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Effect of Population Growth on Development Process

*21. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:†

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH:

Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to the statistics available with Government, failure in checking the population growth rate would affect the development process of various programmes/schemes of Government;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to check the growth rate of population; and

(c) what are the fields which are likely to be affected by this increase of population growth rate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Excessive growth of population offets some of the benefits of development, necessitates divergence of more resources for meeting the minimum needs of consumption and thus reduce the potential for raising the investible resources. This has the impact of slowing down the development process.

(b) The growth rate of population is sought to be curbed through a comprehensive family welfare programme and socio-economic development.

The main features of the Family Welfare Programme at present are:—

(i) providing family planning aids/services through country-wide net-work of primary health care;

(ii) Special child survival programmes, *i.e.*, Universal Immunization Programme, Oral Rehydration Therapy, Prophylaxis against Nutritional Deficiencies etc. The Immunization Programme has been given a new impetus under the Technology Mission on Immunization;

(iii) providing 100 per cent coverage of immunization to pregnant mothers by 1990;

(iv) the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) programme, aiming at educating people about the benefits of small family and creating awareness about the methods of family planning and the services being offered;

(v) involvement of Non-Governmental Organisations and voluntary agencies in the programme. These programmes have been strengthened further during the Seventh Plan. Besides these programmes, raising the status of women by providing them formal and informal education and job opportunities, and raising age at marriage are the important objectives on social front.

(c) Some of the consequences of a high rate of growth of population are that it reduces the per capita availability of food

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Bhagatram Manhar.

adversely affects nutrition and health and puts excessive strain on basic amenities, housing and social services like health and education. It leads to fragmentation of holdings in agriculture and increase pressure of demand for work.

SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Sir, the population of the country is growing day by day. From 1981 to March 1988, the population growth was 10.64 crore. The rural and urban ratio comes to 60:40. I would like to ask the Minister as to whether he is in touch with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. If so, what were the sterilisation targets fixed during the last five years and whether these have been achieved? If these targets have not been achieved, what are the reasons therefor and what sterilisation targets have been fixed for the next five years?

Further, I would like to know whether Government proposes to introduce certain schemes and programmes in which the States would be asked to give higher priority in various development schemes to those who accept the small family norm. If so, what are the details in this regard and what are the incentives proposed to be given to those who accept the small family norm?

SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI: Population is a serious problem in our country. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have taken certain steps to control the birth rate. Lots of measures have been taken by the Government like, in my statement I have said, giving family welfare benefits to the people, providing immunization facilities for children and pregnant women, also we have given some facilities and taken some steps like education, creating public awareness, raising the marriage age, giving some special status to women through formal and informal education, giving some job opportunities, etc. These are certain steps which we have taken so far to control population growth. But it is a fact that we have not been able to control it as we expected. There are lot of reasons for this. These schemes are implemented cent per cent through the State Governments. So far as the finance is concerned, cent per cent finance is from Government of India, but these schemes are implemented solely through the State Government's machinery. Also there are so many other reasons. Earlier the birth rate had not increased so much, the population had not increased so much because the medical facilities were not available and the death rate was so high. So the population was less. But after Independence, Government had taken certain steps, certain welfare measures. It was only after the welfare schemes were implemented throughout the country that the death rate has gone down and the infant mortality rate also has come down. Now, about the projection for the next five years, in the Planning Commission we have appointed a special expert committee. They have gone into it and presented their views on population projection... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: What is this saga going on?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please give the main recommendations of the committee.

SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI: The honourable Member wanted to know what is the target, what is the plan, of the Government.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: It is quite enough now.... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI : The honourable Member has raised many points. I am trying to give replies to some of them. Our projection for population is like this: Birth rate....

...(Interruptions)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please make the answer as short as possible. You have taken quite a bit of time.... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Sir, I don't get a reply as to what is the target for five years.. (*Interruptions*)... Then, what incentives are they going to give to small families? He has not replied to my question, Sir.... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI JAGESH DESAI : You ask a pointed question and get a reply.

...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Sir, a conference was recently held in Delhi to review implementation of family welfare programmes. The conference was attended by experts from the States and also from the Planning Commission. I would like to ask the Minister what is the decision arrived at this conference about the check of population growth in the country and what steps are taken to implement the decision.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He wants to know the rate of growth which the committee holds to be at the present moment and the steps taken to control it.

SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI: Rate of growth is 25 per cent. Every year, 15 million....(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : Twenty-five per cent?...(*Interruptions*)...I may help the Minister. It is 25 per cent per decade; it is not 25 per cent per year.

SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI: In a particular period, during 1971—81, it was 25 per cent. Every year our population is increasing by 15 million, a little over two per cent. The growth rate is two per cent. So far as the Seventh Plan is concerned, Government have taken some measures which I have already explained to the honourable Member in my reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You may circulate those recommendations.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: The Prime Minister went to the United States and said that our population is one billion, and then he was questioned there. Government has got all the population figures wrong. And he also said that since he went abroad, the population had gone up ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have called Mr. Bir Bhadra Pratap Singh. You answer his supplementary.

SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI: In my reply I have said about the steps taken by the Government to control the population. In my statement also I have mentioned certain steps which the Government have taken.

SHRI A. G. KUKARNI: We have understood everything now.

SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI : We are confident that if these schemes are fully implemented, definitely we can control the population. If it is not controlled, it would be a problem for all of us.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Sir, I want reply on two counts. The growth of population has eroded all gains of development because the food production in the last 30 years has doubled, but there has been no increase in per capita production because of the increase in population. Now, the second debatable question is that the per capita income at fixed prices is constant, taking the 30 years of record, because of the growth of population. In spite of the technological progress and the rise in the standard of living, the argument is that the poor are growing poorer because the population growth has a multiplier effect on poverty. This is against our national objective. On this count the second problem is that the population growth has led to rackless exploitation of our national resources like forests and water.

I would like to point out very specifically that the Government programmes lack conviction. These programmes are diverted towards the elitist urban groups, whereas the steep rise in population is in the rural areas. Now, the second problem is that the large work force employed in the family welfare programme is out of touch with the rural people and the rural surroundings and the problem lacks correct motivation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Put your question please.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: I would like to know what is being done in order to create correct motivation for this large work force which is being employed for the purpose? Lastly, I would like to point out that even on the frame of technology, the Government has accepted and discarded a number of contra-

ceptive procedures leaving the common folk in confusion. So, I would like to know what he will do actually to create a correct motivation and correct conviction in those who are going to implement it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You talk only about what concerns the Planning Ministry.

SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI: Sir, this a Ministry which decides only policy matters and then gives main guidelines. Anyhow, I agree with the hon. Member when he referred about the rural poverty and increase of population among the poor sections. It is true. We have said in our own document that there is an increase of population in the rural sector of society. Now, because of illiteracy and because of poverty the increase in population is always there. So, we have taken some steps not only on the family welfare side, but also on the socio-economic side. It is our view that if we increase the facilities of more education, more awareness and also more facilities on family welfare, then surely they will take advantage of it and would think of limiting their family size.

Regarding the other problems, as I have already stated...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You only tell them that the Planning Commission is providing all the money and you are trying to improve the economic lot of the people. This is so far as your Ministry is concerned. That is all.

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA. Sir, according to the reply given by the Minister, one of the steps being taken is raising age of marriage on the social front. At present the minimum marriageable age of female is 18 years and for the male 21 years. On a certain day in Rajasthan thousands of child marriages are performed. So my question is what steps are being taken by the Government to prevent such child marriages?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Law has been in force.

SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI : Sir, in my main reply I have already said...

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is asking about child marriages. What are you doing to prevent child marriages?

SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI: We cannot enforce anything. It is a social problem.... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : Sir, there is a law against it. It has been in force.

SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI: Sir, we have raised marriageable age to 18 years in the case of girls and 21 years in the case of boys. The Government machinery can enforce it if there is cooperation from the people. It is a problem of the entire nation. We all should involve in it to tackle this problem. That is why I said that priority has been given on education and bringing about awareness of the small family norm and also through motivation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 22.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Sir, it is such an important question and not much has been said in the last two years. Therefore, I would request you to give some more time for this question. What is to be done to tackle this problem? I would request Mr. Solanki to reply ...(*Interruptions*).

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : It is a question of the economic character. Of course, replies have been given on the Health Ministry side. The Minister has not replied about the economic character of the problem. Why has the senior Minister not replied? Why did you go to the next question? Yesterday we spent 30 minutes on one question and today you are not giving any opportunity. We want to discuss about priorities of planning and priorities of economy and priorities of employment generation. How is that the Government is not going to come out with a suitable reply? And you have stopped everything.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: Sir, let there be a discussion on this problem. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: The Chair has been threatened, the way it has been done. A reflection is being cast. I demand the remarks to be expunged. It is a reflection on the Chair.... (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You see, we spent 16 minutes on one question. I saw that the supplementaries were such which should have been directed to the Minister for Health and Family Planning. That is why...

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : Sir, what about the economic content of planning for population? The Minister has not replied to this point. He spoke only on health matters. You are carried away by his reply. We want to know, what is the planning priority.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have told you on behalf of the Planning Minister that he is providing money for different schemes and those schemes are to be implemented by the State Governments and other things are to be implemented by the Health Ministry. Already we spent 16 minutes on this question. Other questions are as important as the first one.

...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: Sir, it is very important and we want to have Half an Hour Discussion on this. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Sir, during the last Session, we had a special discussion on family planning initiated by me and only ten Members were present at that time. They always ask for discussion but when the discussion takes place, nobody is present. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: We are interested in economic question and not in Upendra's question. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: We reques' Half an Hour Discussion on this question. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: So far as this is concerned, it has been settled that the Committee's recommendations, their gist will be circulated. He has said that the money is being provided by the Centre for different schemes which are to be implemented by various State Governments. Now as to what methods are to be adopted and then there was a question about child marriage, again there is a law and all of you were restless when the question was being answered. Then I always get the complaint that I give so much time. I gave 16 minutes to this question and five minutes to this discussion.... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: We are exercised because family planing programme has failed. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just as there is indulgence for maiden speech, there should be indulgence for maiden answer.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : That is very good, Sir. We are all exercised because family planning in this country has failed in spite of heavy expenditure incurred for that. Therefore, we are all concerned about this. Therefore, there is a demand for the debate from all quarters here. I plead with you, you may allow another discussion on family planning programme.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will be meeting at 4 o' clock and whatever is to be done, we will decide. Now let us move on to the next question. Q. No. 22.

Repartriation of Chakma Refugees

*22 SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any fresh steps for the repatriation of Chakma refugees now being lodged in Tripura;

(b) whether there have been bilateral discussions between the Governments of India and Bangladash on this issue recently; and

(c) if so, the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) and (b) Government have been maintaining continuous contact with the Bangladesh Government to persuade them to take the necessary steps to create conditions in the Chittagong Hill Tracts which would give the refugees the confidence to return to their homes voluntarily. We